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STORM TROOP



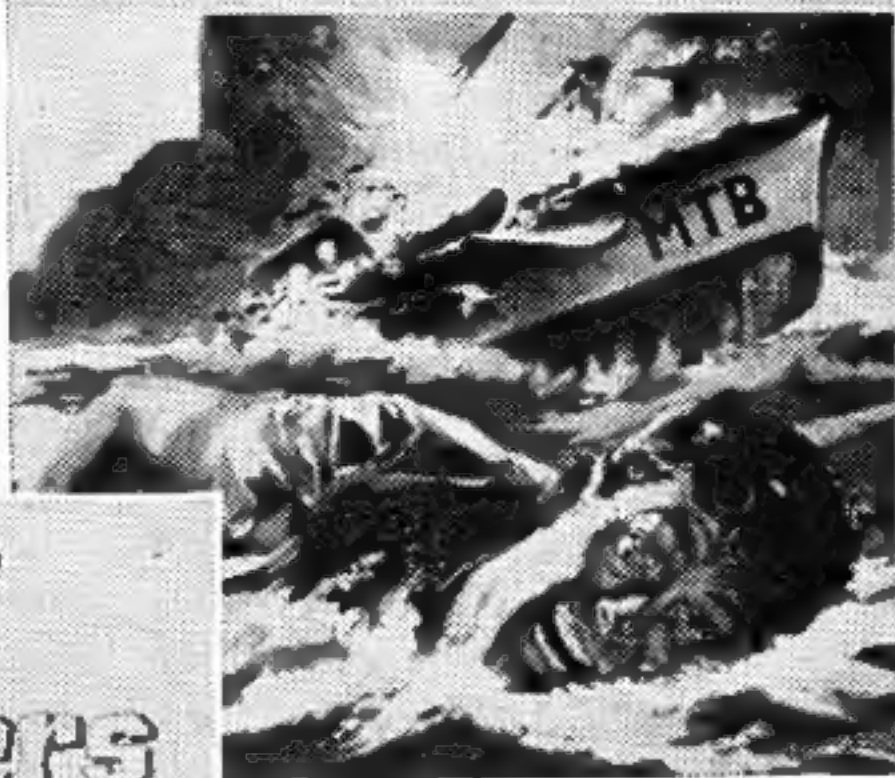
LOOK!

**THESE
TWO
TERRIFIC
ISSUES**

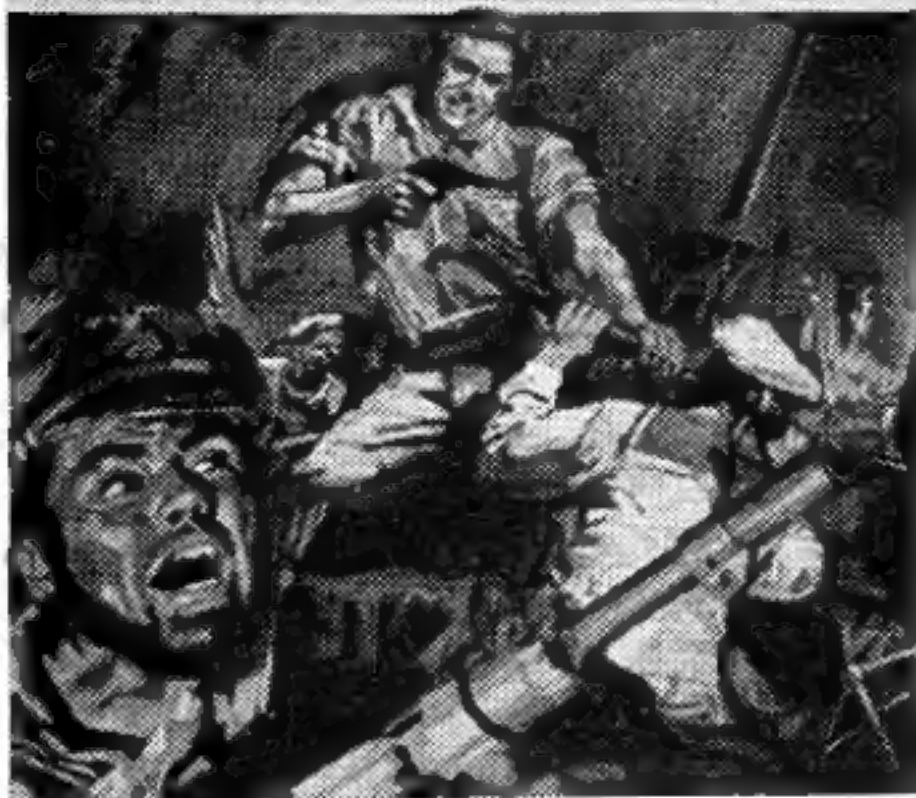
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STORM TROOP


THEIR MISSIONS WERE LONELY, PERPETUAL DICE-GAMES WITH DEATH, AND THERE WERE MANY GAPS IN THEIR RANKS WHEN THEY RETURNED. BUT MEN WERE PROUD TO WEAR THE COVETED BADGE OF THE "SPEARHEAD"...



"SPEARHEAD"--THE ADVANCED STRIKING FORCE--WAS A UNIT BORN IN THE MIND OF A MAN AS HE BATTLED HIS WAY TO FREEDOM FROM A PRISON CAGE. BUT BEFORE HE COULD GET HIS SCHEME UNDER WAY, HE HAD TO FIGHT ANOTHER GRUELING STRUGGLE--AGAINST THE ENTRENCHED RESISTANCE TO NEW IDEAS SHARED BY THE "OLD GUARD" OF HIS OWN ARMY.


Chapter 1. Dash for Freedom

THE GUARDS OF THE PERRINA PRISONER-OF-WAR CAGE HAD GROWN CARELESS, HAVING LOUNGED AROUND TOO LONG IN THE SICILIAN SUN. WHEN THE UPROAR BEGAN IN THE MAIN COMPOUND IT CAME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO THEM ...



MAMA MIA!
TWO O'CLOCK IN
THE MORNING ...
WHAT A TIME TO
START A ROW!

MAKING THEIR CIRCUIT OF THE OUTER PERIMETER OF THE CAGE, THE ITALIAN SENTRIES PASSED OVER A SMALL PATCH OF EARTH SEEMINGLY THE SAME AS ALL THE SANDY ROCK AROUND IT. BUT HARDLY HAD THE POUNDING BOOTS OF THE ITALIANS MARCHED ON THAN THE GROUND HEAVED OPEN IN THE HALF LIGHT.



ALL CLEAR,
JOCK!

I'M RIGHT BEHIND
YE, SIR! I'M
THINKIN' IT WILL
TAKE A GOOD MAN
TO GET US BACK
INSIDE THAT PLACE
AGAIN!

NO ONE HAD YET SUCCEEDED IN GETTING CLEAR FROM PERRINA CAMP. THERE WAS NO COVER FOR DAYLIGHT ATTEMPTS AND THE POWERFUL SEARCHLIGHTS SOON PINPOINTED THOSE WHO TRIED TO REACH THE COVER OF THE SCRUBLAND BARELY HALF A MILE AWAY AT NIGHT.

WHY DO WE BOTHER WITH THESE MAD INGLESIS! LET THEM FIGHT ALL NIGHT IF THEY WANT TO!



KEEP IT UP, CHUMS! THEY'VE NEARLY MADE IT... AND THE EYTIES DON'T SUSPECT A THING!

AS THE FAKE RIOT, STAGED TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THEIR ESCAPE, RAGED ON, LIEUTENANT MORRELL AND SERGEANT JOCK MACDONALD LAY FLAT UNDER THE THICK PROTECTION OF A SCRUB BUSH HALF A MILE AWAY...

WE'VE DONE IT, SIR! YOUR IDEA WORKED A TREAT!



WE'RE CLEAR FOR THE MOMENT, JOCK, BUT THE HEAT WILL BE ON AFTER TOMORROW'S ROLL CALL!

Storm Troop

THE TWO MEN WAITED MOTIONLESS IN THEIR HIDING PLACE UNTIL THE LAST SEARCHLIGHT BEAM HAD SNAPPED OFF INTO DARKNESS. THEN THEY SET OFF, HEADING FOR THE COAST. WHEN DAWN CAME, THEY STOOD LOOKING OUT OVER THE SEA ... THE GREATEST OBSTACLE IN THEIR JOURNEY TO FREEDOM.

WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN DOWN THERE BEFORE DAYLIGHT, JOCK! NOW EVERY ROAD WILL BE WATCHED!

AND EVERY BOAT, TOO, SIR! WE'D BETTER FIND A WEE HIDE-OUT SPOT UNTIL TONIGHT!



AS THE HOT DAY PASSED, THEY LAY ON THE FRINGE OF A TOMATO FIELD WATCHING THE SEARCH PARTIES GO PAST ON THE WHITE, DUSTY ROAD CLOSE BY ...

THIS FOOL REFUSES TO SEARCH THAT FIELD, HERR LEUTNANT! HE'S AFRAID OF SPOILING A FEW PALTRY TOMATOES!



LET THEM GO, SERGEANT! CHASING UNARMED PRISONERS IS WORK FOR ITALIANS! WE SHALL KEEP OUR ENERGY FOR FIGHTING!

THE NAZI LEUTNANT WAS IN NO HURRY. HE LITTLE REALISED THAT THE TWO MEN HE SOUGHT WERE CLOSE AT HAND ... AND WOULD BE EVEN CLOSER BEFORE MANY SECONDS HAD PASSED.

LISTEN, JOCK, IT MAY BE SOME DAYS BEFORE THE HUE AND CRY EASES OFF, AND I DON'T FANCY THIS FIELD AS PERMANENT LODGINGS. I'VE AN IDEA -- FOLLOW ME!



AS THE NAZI OFFICER TURNED TO ENTER THE CAR, MORRELL'S BRAVNY ARMS WERE ALREADY ROUND HIS NECK. JOCK THREW A HANDFUL OF DUST INTO THE GERMAN SERGEANT'S EYES...



THE ENGLISHMAN AND THE SCOT HAD SERVED A HARD APPRENTICESHIP IN THE DESERT WAR. THE TWO NAZIS WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR UNIFORMS, TRUSSED AND BUNDLED INTO THE BACK OF THE CAR...

THIS ISN'T GOING TO LOOK EXACTLY SAVILLE ROW, JOCK! MAKE SURE YOU HIDE THOSE TWO KRAUTS WITH THAT CAR RUG.



EVEN MORRELL WAS AMAZED AT THE EASE WITH WHICH HE COULD COMMANDEER SUPPLIES, MASQUERADING AS A NAZI OFFICER. MEN DID NOT ASK FOR PAYMENT WHEN THE FUEHRER'S MEN DEMANDED.

SEND YOUR BILL TO H.Q.! THOUGH WHY WE SHOULD PAY YOU FOR SUCH CATTLE FODDER I DON'T KNOW!

BARBARIAN TEDESCHI! CATTLE FODDER! AND THEY HAVE EATEN THE BEST WE HAVE!





FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS THEY LIVED THE PART OF RUTHLESS, ARROGANT NAZIS. THEN MORRELL DECIDED THE TIME HAD COME TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF GETTING A BOAT...



ONLY THE MAN IN THE WIND-CHEATER MOVED AS MORRELL SPOKE. THE REST SAT RIGID WITH FEAR AND DISTRUST.



SI, I SPEAK EENGLISH!
I WAS IN NOO YARK FOR
TEN YEARS! YOUR
EENGLISH IS GOOD...
FOR A GERMAN!

I TELL YOU WE ARE
ENGLISH, ESCAPED FROM
PERRINA! WE NEED A
BOAT! YOU ITALIANS HAVE
NO CAUSE TO LOVE THE
NAZIS -- WE ASK YOU
TO HELP US!



I THINK YOU SPEAK
THE TRUTH, MY
FRIEND, BUT NO-ONE
HERE WILL HELP
YOU... THE GESTAPO
ARE BRUTAL TO
THOSE SUSPECTED
OF BEING FRIENDLY
WITH THE ENEMY!

AND IF
WE DECIDE
TO HELP
OURSELVES?

HIS CONFIDENCE FLOODING BACK,
THE ITALIAN GRINNED CYNICALLY INTO
MORRELL'S ANXIOUS FACE...

WITHOUT ONE OF US
YOU WOULD NOT GET
THREE MILES FROM
THE LAND! AND ONLY
ONE BOAT HERE CAN
MATCH THE NAVAL
PATROLS FOR SPEED!
IT IS MINE -- AND IT
WOULD COST YOU
PLENTY TO HIRE
IT!

NAME YOUR
PRICE... AND
HAVE YOUR
BOAT READY
FOR THIS
TIME
TOMORROW
NIGHT!



Storm Troop



EARLY NEXT DAY, THE PAY CLERKS AT THE ITALIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS IN THE TOWN WERE SURPRISED BY THE VISIT OF A BRUSQUE NAZI LEUTNANT AND HIS SERGEANT.



AS THEY LEFT THE CASHIER'S OFFICE WITH THE MONEY, JOCK MACDONALD HAD A SUDDEN URGE TO RUN FOR IT. BUT THE COOL SWAGGER OF LEUTENANT MORRELL RESTRAINED HIM.



WITH THE CASH SAFELY IN HIS HANDS, GILLO, THE SICILIAN WHO HAD BEEN TO NEW YORK, GOT THINGS MOVING QUICKLY.



A PART OF THE MONEY MORRELL HAD OBTAINED HAD GONE TO MAKE SURE THAT NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY THE ITALIAN NAVAL PATROLS. THEY WERE WELL USED TO THE NOCTURNAL ACTIVITIES OF GILLO ...



MORRELL ANXIOUSLY SCANNED THE DARK HORIZON, BUT THERE WAS ONLY THE FAINTLY LUMINOUS SPARKLE OF THE WATER AS THE SHARP BOWS SLASHED INTO THE CALM SEA ...

I HOPE YOU'RE RIGHT, GILLO, AND WE DON'T RUN INTO ONE OF THE JERRY BOATS

THAT GOES FOR ME, TOO, BUD! SIGNOR GILLO WOULD HAVE TO ANSWER TOO MANY AWKWARD QUESTIONS FROM THE TEDESCHI!



SUDDENLY, MOMENTS LATER, THEY WERE BLINDED BY A POWERFUL BEAM OF LIGHT...



BUT THE COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH FRIGATE WHICH PICKED THEM UP WAS CONVINCED HE HAD CHANCED UPON SOME SUBTLE PIECE OF NAZI ESPIONAGE. HE SANK THE MOTOR BOAT AND SET COURSE FOR BASE WITH MORRELL AND HIS FRIENDS PRISONERS...



IT WAS THEN THAT THE FIRST GLIMMERING IDEA OF "SPEARHEAD" BEGAN TO DAWN ON LEUTENANT MORRELL ...

JOCK! DO YOU REALISE WHAT WE MANAGED TO DO DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS?

AYE, WE GOT S.GNOR GILLO'S BOAT SUNK ... AND WE'VE ENDED UP UNDER LOCK AND KEY AS SUSPECTED NAZIS!



MORRELL WAS SO WRAPPED UP IN HIS THOUGHTS THAT HE DID NOT EVEN HEAR THE SCOT'S JAUNDICED REPLY.

WE LIVED OFF THE TERRITORY, JOCK.. WE ATE THEIR FOOD, WE STOLE THEIR MONEY.. JUST THINK WHAT WE COULD HAVE DONE!






THE CURIOUS SPECTATORS WHO WATCHED THE ODD TRIO DISEMBARK THE FOLLOWING DAY COULD NOT REALISE THE SURGING EXCITEMENT IN THE MIND OF THE TALL MAN IN THE NAZI LEUTNANT'S UNIFORM.



Chapter 2. Reluctant Volunteers


LEUTENANT MORRELL CAME BACK FROM LEAVE WITH A NEW OUTFIT AND AN ITCH TO TRY OUT HIS IDEA. BUT STRAIGHTWAY HE RAN INTO HIS FIRST OBSTACLE. THIS WAS HIS NEW C.O., COLONEL WYNN-GATE, AN OFFICER OF THE OLD SCHOOL.

YOU'LL BE A WELCOME ADDITION TO OUR RANKS, LEUTENANT. PITY YOU'RE NOT A REGULAR, BUT WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE DO, EH?



MORRELL FELT A TWINGE OF DISAPPOINTMENT AS HE SIZED UP THE COLONEL. BUT HE WAS IMPATIENT TO GET MOVING.

SOME OF US HAVE IDEAS NOW AND AGAIN, SIR! I'VE BEEN PLANNING A NEW TYPE OF UNIT! WITH THIRTY MEN AND THE MINIMUM OF EQUIPMENT WE CAN...



THE COLONEL LISTENED IN STUNNED SILENCE FOR FIVE MINUTES. THEN HE THUMPED THE DESK HARD .. AND REPLIED ...

I HAVE NEVER HEARD SUCH SCATTERBRAINED BALDERDASH IN MY LIFE, MORRELL. WE HAVE STAFF OFFICERS -- **REGULAR** OFFICERS -- TO DO THE PLANNING IN THIS ARMY. CONFINE YOURSELF TO YOUR DUTIES, MAN!



IN THE BUSTLE AND PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION OF THE ISLAND OF SICILY, IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE THAT MORRELL'S PLAN WOULD EVER BE HEARD BY ANYONE IN REAL AUTHORITY.

WHAT A CARRY ON! IN AND OUT THE PERISHIN' WATER ALL DAY...AND WE HAVE TO POLISH ALL BRASS AND METAL EQUIPMENT IT'S BARMY!



THE BRIGADIER WAS INSPECTING THE COLONEL'S BATTALION ... AND THE COLONEL'S OLD-FASHIONED SPIT-AND-POLISH IDEAS WERE TO BE OF GREAT HELP TO LIEUTENANT MORRELL.

AS HE PASSED THE BRIGADIER AND THE COLONEL, MORRELL OVERHEARD A FRAGMENT OF THE CONVERSATION.

I THOUGHT WE'D LEARNED THAT IT'S NO GOOD SENDING MEN INTO ACTION WITH POLISHED EQUIPMENT, COLONEL... THEY'RE A SITTING TARGET FOR ENEMY SNIPERS!

FROM THE HARD GLINT IN THE BRIGADIER'S EYES, THE COLONEL SENSED IT WOULD NOT BE WISE TO ADMIT THAT THE "BULL" HAD BEEN LAID ON FOR HIS BENEFIT!

EARLY NEXT MORNING, MORRELL WAS WAITING FOR THE BRIGADIER. HE WAS BREAKING EVERY RULE IN THE BOOK, SHORT-CIRCUITING THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, BUT HE WAS GAMBLING ON HIS JUDGMENT OF THE SENIOR OFFICER'S CHARACTER.

GOOD MORNING, LIEUTENANT MORRELL, ISN'T IT?

MAY I HAVE FIVE MINUTES OF YOUR TIME, SIR... PLEASE HEAR ME OUT...

THE BRIGADIER WAS BY NO MEANS THE TYPICAL MILITARY MIND. HE WAS AN OXFORD DON, WHO HAD PROVED HIS BRILLIANCE UNDER WAVELL IN THE DESERT DAYS. HE HEARD MORRELL'S SCHEME ... AND NODDED ...

LEUTENANT, I THINK YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING! BUT DON'T BE TOO OPTIMISTIC... THE OLD BRIGADE STILL CARRY A LOT OF WEIGHT IN HIGH QUARTERS!



THERE WAS A LIGHT OF ENTHUSIASM IN THE STAFF OFFICER'S EYE WHICH MATCHED THAT OF MORRELL.

THANK YOU, SIR! IF YOU CAN GET THE OKAY, WE WON'T LET YOU DOWN!

I'LL DO MY BEST TO HELP MORRELL, BUT DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS - YOU MAY FINISH UP ON YOUR COLONEL'S CHARGE SHEET YET!




IT WAS A WEEK BEFORE THE GRUDGING ASSENT OF THE GENERAL WAS GIVEN ...


ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, HOWARD, YOU WIN! **BUT I WARN YOU, ANYTHING AMISS AND IT'S ON YOUR SHOULDER!** FURTHERMORE - YOU CAN HAVE THE JOB OF PLACATING MORRELL'S COLONEL!



BUT THE COLONEL'S INDIGNATION AT BEING BY-PASSED BY A MERE LIEUTENANT WAS NOT TO BE SMOOTHED OVER BY SOFT WORDS FROM A BRIGADIER. THE COLONEL STILL HAD FRIENDS AND HE WAS PREPARED TO USE THEM ..



... SO TOMORROW
THEY'LL BE ASKING
YOU FOR A COUPLE OF
DOZEN TOUGH RANKERS
TO VOLUNTEER FOR
SPECIAL DUTY BEHIND
THE ENEMY LINES
WITH THIS CHAP
MORRELL!



I'VE GOT A FEW
TROUBLESOME
CHARACTERS I'VE
BEEN WANTING TO
UNLOAD FOR SOME
TIME! LEAVE IT
TO ME!

THE COLONEL OF THE RESERVE BATTALION KEPT HIS WORD, AS MORRELL FOUND OUT WHEN HE RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO SUPPLY HEADQUARTERS.



AYE, THE
VOLUNTEERS
HAVE ARRIVED,
SIR! AND A
ROUGHER
BUNCH OF
LAYABOUTS
YOU'VE YET
TO SEE!

AS SERGEANT MACDONALD INTRODUCED EACH MAN BY NAME, MORRELL FUMED AT THE TRICK THAT HAD BEEN PLAYED ON HIM.

ELLISON, SMITH
AND CORBETT,
SIR ...

EVERY MAN JACK OF THEM
LOOKS AS IF HE'S DONE SIX
MONTHS' HARD LABOUR!
THEY CERTAINLY SCRAPPED
THE BOTTOM OF THE
BARREL FOR ME!



BUT THE WORST SPECIMENS WERE AT THE END OF THE LINE ..

TINY PRODGER AND TICH
WATERS, EH? TEN TO ONE
WE'LL HAVE MORE TROUBLE
WITH THOSE TWO THAN THE
REST PUT TOGETHER!



SOME OF THE MEN WERE GLAD OF A CHANGE FROM THE DULL ROUTINE OF ORDINARY ARMY LIFE AND PITCHED INTO THEIR TRAINING WITH SPIRIT. BUT SOME OF THEM WERE SHIRKERS AND PRODGER AND WATERS WERE THEIR NATURAL RINGLEADERS.



LATER THAT DAY, THE GROUP WAS PRACTISING ROCK-CLIMBING. ONCE AGAIN JOCK MACDONALD FOUND PRODGER AND WATERS TRYING TO DODGE THE COLUMN ...



THREATENINGLY, PRODGER ROSE TO HIS FEET AND STRODE TOWARDS SERGEANT MACDONALD.

YEAH! I RECKON I WILL, TICH! OUR DEAR SERGEANT HAS HAD THIS SALUTE COMIN' TO HIM!

CUT IT OUT, PRODGER!

BUT BEFORE JOCK MACDONALD COULD SAY ANOTHER WORD, PRODGER'S HUGE FIST HAD SMASHED INTO HIS FACE, KNOCKING HIM BACKWARDS.

I WAS SOLDIERIN' WHEN YOU WERE IN SHORT PANTS, MACDONALD. THIS'LL TEACH YOU!

SURE -- IF YOU RECKON TINY AND ME ARE SCARED OF THE GLASSHOUSE, YOU'RE OFF YOUR NUT!

FROM THE CLIFF TOP, MORRELL HAD SPOTTED THE TROUBLE. AS SERGEANT MACDONALD STARTED TO LEVER HIMSELF UP FROM THE SAND, THE PLATOON COMMANDER WAS SLIDING DOWN THE FINAL FEW FEET OF THE ROPE.

POOR OLD SARGE, HE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD AN ACCIDENT!

YEAH, I SEEN IT PRODGE -- HE TRIPPED IN THE SAND AND HURT HIS MOUTH.



THE TWO MEN SWIVELLED AROUND AS MORRELL'S VOICE RASPED OUT...

HELP SERGEANT MACDONALD TO HIS FEET, WATERS! NOW, PRODGER -- I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER -- YOU'RE TRYING TO GET COURT MARTIALLED OUT OF THIS UNIT. BUT I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU THE CHANCE!



MORRELL FELT A COLD LOATHING FOR THE BULLYING PRIVATE.

WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU'RE GOING TO STICK WITH THIS UNIT, PRODGER--BUT FIRST OF ALL I'M GOING TO SETTLE A SCORE. FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES, FORGET I'M AN OFFICER!



PRODGER LEAPT FORWARD WITH HIS MASSIVE ARMS FLAILING THE AIR. THERE WAS WILD HATRED IN HIS EYES.

STUPID LOOT! HE'S LEFT HIMSELF WIDE OPEN! IT'S LIKE HITTING A BARN DOOR!



MORRELL LITHELY DODGED THE CRUSHING BLOWS AND IN A SPLIT SECOND THE UNGAINLY BODY OF HIS OPPONENT FLEW GROTESQUELY THROUGH THE AIR.



AS PRODGER SHAMBLED TO HIS FEET, MORRELL APPLIED A PAINFUL ARM LOCK ..

AAAAARGH!

THIS IS JUST THE
START, PRODGER!



THE HARD EDGE OF MORRELL'S HAND CHOPPED DOWN ON A NERVE CENTRE IN PRODGER'S BEEFY ARM...



THREE TIMES, THE HAND SWEEPED DOWN UNTIL THE BIG MAN CRUMPLED, HIS ARM HALF-PARALYSED...

I'D REALLY GIVE YOU THE TREATMENT, PRODGER, EXCEPT FOR THE FACT THAT A BIG APE LIKE YOU MIGHT COME IN HANDY WHERE WE'RE GOING, IF ONLY FOR CARRYING AMMO!



WITH A CONTEMPTUOUS GESTURE, THE PLATOON COMMANDER PITCHED THE TERRIFIED BULLY AT THE FEET OF THE MEN WHO HAD DRIFTED ACROSS TO WITNESS THE FIGHT



MORRELL WAS SURPRISED HOW QUICKLY THE UNIT REACTED TO THE EXAMPLE HE HAD MADE OF PRODGER. WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS THE ATMOSPHERE WAS DIFFERENT...

I'VE GOT 'EM ON A SCROUNGING TEST FOR A DAY OR TWO, SIR! WITH WATERS TO GUIDE THEM THEY'RE DOING WELL -- EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT VERY POPULAR WITH THE LOCALS!

THEY SEEM MORE IMPRESSED WITH FISTS THAN FANCY WORDS, JACK!



HAVING BACKED MORRELL ALL THE WAY, THE BRIGADIER WAS JUST AS ANXIOUS AS THE JUNIOR OFFICER TO SEE THE EXPERIMENT SUCCEED.

GOOD IDEA—TRAINING THEM TO USE JERRY WEAPONS, MORRELL! THEY'RE GETTING DOWN TO IT WELL, BUT I HEARD YOU'D BEEN SENT A BUNCH OF NO-GOODS!

THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF SCRUFFS, SIR! BUT YOU KNOW THE OLD SAYING 'SET A THIEF TO CATCH A THIEF'...

THE BRIGADIER UNFOLDED A MAP ACROSS THE BONNET OF THE JEEP.

WE'VE GOT A JOB FOR YOU, LIEUTENANT! NOT THE ROVING MISSION YOU EXPECTED, BUT A JOB THAT **MUST** BE ACCOMPLISHED!

IT'S THREE DAYS TO ZERO HOUR FOR THE BIG ATTACK ON SICILY! I WANT YOUR UNIT TO KNOCK OUT THREE ARTILLERY BATTERIES WHICH WOULD PROVE A MENACE TO THE MAIN ASSAULT!

SPEARHEAD WON'T LET YOU DOWN, SIR!

Chapter 3. *Rough Landing*

THE BLUE SIGNAL LIGHT OF THE NAVAL ESCORT GRADUALLY GREW FAINTER IN THE BLACK, HEAVING SICILIAN SEA. THE "SPEARHEAD" UNIT WAS ON ITS OWN!

WHAT A START, JOCK!
HALF AN HOUR AFLOAT IN
THIS SEA AND SOME OF
THESE BLOKE'S WON'T BE
IN ANY STATE TO FIGHT.

OCH! THEY'LL BE SO
GLAD TO GET ON DRY
LAND THERE'LL NOT BE
ENOUGH NAZIS IN SICILY
TO PUSH 'EM BACK ON
THE WATER AGAIN!

SURE ENOUGH THE PITCHING OF THE
SMALL BOAT WAS HAVING ITS EFFECT
ON MORRELL'S BAND...

COR, SUFFERIN'
CATFISH! I'D HAVE GONE
OVER THE WALL IF I'D
KNOWN WHAT IT WAS
GOING TO BE LIKE!


SUDDENLY, WITH A SICKENING CRUNCH, THE SMALL BOAT GROUND INTO A PARTIALLY-SUBMERGED ROCK. WATER BOILED INTO THE CRAFT.



THE
BOTTOM'S
TORN OPEN!

EVERY MAN
FOR HIMSELF...
LEAVE THE
HEAVY KIT!

IN THE ROUGH SEA IT WAS A NIGHTMARE JOURNEY TO THE SHORE. MORRELL WATCHED THE WET GROUP OF MEN AS THEY STAGGERED ASHORE. THEY WERE COLD AND DEMORALISED, THEIR WEAPONS WERE GONE, AND THEY HAD SEEN FOUR OF THEIR COMRADES DIE IN THE MERCILESS, POUNDING SURF.



GET UP
UNDER THE
CLIFFS. THERE'S
MORE SHELTER
THERE!

AS HE JOINED THE MEN AT THE CLIFF BASE, MORRELL COULD SENSE THE REBELLIOUS ATMOSPHERE.

THERE'S NO TIME FOR
DOUBTS ON WHAT
WENT WRONG! REMEMBER,
WE WERE TRAINED TO
FIGHT AND SURVIVE
BEHIND THE ENEMY
LINES... NOW'S OUR
CHANCE TO PROVE
IT!



AS MORRELL BRIEFED THE MEN, SERGEANT MACDONALD SCRAPED THE GROUND THOUGHTFULLY WITH HIS BOOT. HE SUDDENLY STIFFENED AS HE STARED DOWNWARDS.

THAT'S CONCRETE!
AND THE ONLY
PEOPLE TO USE
CONCRETE ON THIS
BEACH WOULD BE
THE MILITARY!



A SUDDEN SIXTH SENSE WARNED JOCK
MACDONALD. EARLY HE RAISED HIS HEAD ...

JOCK FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING STRAIGHT INTO THE PANIC-STRIKEN FEATURES OF PRIVATE GANNINO, AN UNWILLING PARTICIPANT AND ALLY IN THE AXIS CAUSE.

INGLES!
THEY HAVE
COME AT
LAST!

WE'RE
STANDING RIGHT
UNDER A BLOCK
HOUSE!

ONE LONG AGONISING MOMENT OF INDECISION, THEN THE SERGEANT'S COLD LIMBS WERE IN ACTION.

JOCK MACDONALD'S ARM SHOT THROUGH THE APERTURE IN THE PILL BOX, GRABBING THE ITALIAN BY HIS COLLAR.

GET HIM FROM
BEHIND WHILE
I HANG ON TO
HIM!

MAKE IT
FAST!

IN THE LIGHT OF A TORCH, PRIVATE GANNINO TREMBLED WITH FEAR AS THE DESPERATE FACES OF THE ENGLISHERMEN RINGED HIM IN.

BUT I TELL YOU
I AM ALONE HERE!
IT IS THE GERMANS
IDEA OF A JOKE--TO
PUT ME ON DUTY
ON SUCH A NIGHT!

IT'D BETTER
BE THE TRUTH!
NOW GET
MOVING-- LEAD US
TO THE GUN
EMPLACEMENT!

TEN MINUTES LATER, PRIVATE GANNINO TURNED
A SCARED FACE TO THE ENGLISHMAN WHO
CROUCHED CLOSE BEHIND HIM.

THIS IS
IT, SIGNORE!
C...CAN I GO
NOW?

SURE, GANNINO.
YOU CAN GO INSIDE
FOR A CHAT WITH
YOUR NAZI PALS.

BUT SIGNORE,
I AM NEUTRAL...
WHAT WILL
I SAY?

TELL THEM
THE ANGLES!
HAVE ARRIVED!

WITH THE SCHMEISSER TRAINED
ON HIM, THE TUBBY ITALIAN
DISAPPEARED INTO THE GUARD HUT...

THE EYTIE'S STORY
WILL SOUND A BIT THIN
CONSIDERING TONIGHT'S WEATHER,
BUT I'M GAMBLING ON THE
JERRIES COMING OUTSIDE
TO MAKE SURE!

THE TWO NAZIS LEFT ON GUARD DUTY DID NOT KNOW WHETHER TO BE
AMUSED OR ANNOYED BY THE GABBLING ITALIAN.

WE OUGHT TO HAVE YOU
SHOT FOR DESERTING
YOUR POST! THE
ENGLANDERS HERE!
HA! HA! DID YOU EVER
HEAR ANYTHING LIKE
IT, HANS?

YOU ARE
A FOOL,
SPAGHETTI-
EATER!

THE TWO GERMANS WERE VETERANS OF ROMMEL'S AFRIKA KORPS. THEY NO LONGER HAD ANY RESPECT FOR THEIR ALLIES.

WE MUST
HASTEN THE
LITTLE MAN
BACK TO HIS
POST, EH,
HANS?

JA! NO DOUBT
OUR BRAVE ALLY
WILL FIGHT HIS WAY
SINGLE-HANDED
THROUGH THE
ENGLANDERS!

THE GERMAN HAULED THE FRIGHTENED ITALIAN TO THE DOORWAY AND
SHOVED HIM OUT IN THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE HE COULD NOT SEE THE
FACES ALL ROUND HIM.

ON
YOUR WAY,
MUSSO!

JOCK MACDONALD SENT THE FIRST NAZI GUARD THUDDING TO THE EARTH. HIS COMRADE FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING INTO A SCHEISSER MUZZLE.



IN THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED, THE SHAKEN ITALIAN WHISPERED THE INFORMATION THAT MORRELL NEEDED...

THERE ARE
NO MORE THAN
TWENTY GERMAN
HERE, INGLES!

WATCH
EVERY WINDOW
AND EXIT, JOCK!
I'LL TAKE TWO
MEN WITH
ME!



MORRELL LED HIS MEN INTO THE GERMAN BARRACK HUT AND JOLTED THE GERMANS FROM THEIR SLEEP. THE MORE QUICK-WITTED OF THEM GRABBED FOR THEIR GUNS.



FIVE MINUTES LATER THE STARTLED NAZIS WERE BACK ON THEIR BEOS. BUT THIS TIME THEY WERE BOUND AND GAGGED... EXCEPT FOR ONE MAN WHO HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CELEBRATING TOO MUCH. SWIFTLY, THE RAIDERS CHANGED INTO THE ENEMY UNIFORMS.



Storm Troop

MORRELL EXAMINED THE GUN THE NAZIS WERE DETERMINED THAT IF THEY WERE FORCED TO RETREAT, THE SWA PAK, ALLIED ARMS WOULD FIND NOTHING OF VALUE. THE GUN WAS PREPARED FOR INSTANT SELF-DESTRUCTION.



UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF MORRELL, THE TREMBLING ITALIAN SET THE FUSE'S FOR HALF AN HOUR AHEAD. THEY RETURNED TO THE SLEEPING QUARTERS WHERE MORRELL FOUND PROOKER RUNNING TRUE TO FORM - RIFLING THE BELONGINGS OF THE HALF-TIMBERED GERMAN.



HOLDING A GOLD WATCH IN HIS HAND, PROXER SPRANG BACK SURELY HE STUMBLLED AS MORRELL THREATENED HIM WITH HIS FIST.

YOU'RE TOO HANDY WITH YOUR FINGERS, PROXER FOR TWO PINS TO



BUT THE DRUNKEN GERMAN HAD SOBERED UP QUICKLY

NEXT SECOND, THE NAZI SOLDIER WAS RACING OFF...

STOP HIM!



FOR A FEW SECONDS, THE SPEARHEAD MEN WERE CONFUSED IN THE BLACKNESS OF THE NIGHT AFTER THE GLARING LIGHTS OF THE HUT.

THERE HE GOES ... TO THE GUN PIT!



WITH SHOTS RICOCHETING AROUND HIM, THE GERMAN REACHED FOR THE BUTTON.



INSTEAD OF THE EXPECTED EXPLOSION, THERE WAS ONLY THE HARSH BLARE OF AN ALARM KLAXON IN THE DEADLY QUIETNESS.



WITH EVERY MAN BRISTLING WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION, MORRELL'S FORCE RACED OUT FROM THE GUNSITE IN COMMANDEERED TRUCKS TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF A HEAVILY-ARMED NAZI GROUP

KEEP YOUR FINGERS
CROSSED. WITH LUCK
THEY'LL BE INSIDE
THE COMPOUND WHEN
THAT LITTLE LOT
GOES UP!



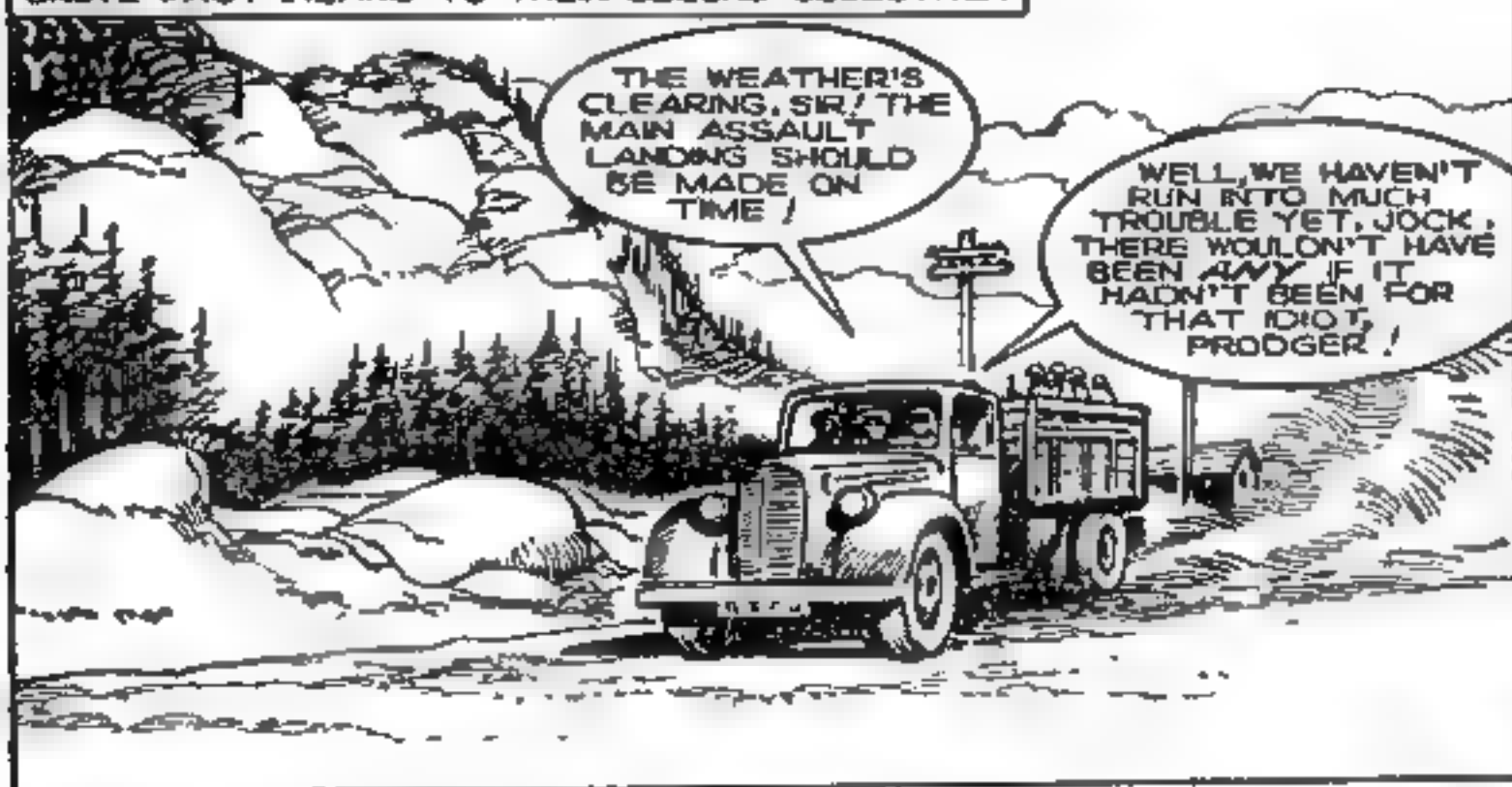
THE FIRST OF THE NAZI TRUCKS WAS CLOSE WHEN THE GERMAN GUN BLEW SKY-HIGH. MORRELL'S LUCK WAS HOLDING!

I'VE A FEELING
THAT THE HUNT
WILL BE ON NOW.
JOCK! WE'LL NEED
MORE THAN LUCK
NEXT TIME!



Chapter 4. *The Yellow Streak*

WITH THE SUN RISING HIGH IN THE SKY, THEY DROVE FAST INLAND TO THEIR SECOND OBJECTIVE.



BARELY ONE KILOMETRE FROM THEIR OBJECTIVE, A NAZI SENTRY CHALLENGED THEM.



THE GLINT OF THE SUN ON THE RISING GUN BARREL GAVE THE SECOND SENTRY A SPLIT SECOND WARNING. IT WAS LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GIVE THE ALARM.



STILL SHOUTING DOWN THE MOUTHPIECE, THE NAZI WHEELED TO MAKE HIS LAST STAND.

ENGLANDERS...
AAAAARGH!

DARN IT!
TOO LATE!



PAUSING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO PATCH UP THE WOUNDED MEN, THE UNIT DROVE ON ACROSS THE VIADUCT. THEY LEFT BEHIND TWO MORE OF THEIR RANKS WHO HAD FOUGHT THEIR LAST BATTLE.

UNLOAD AT THE FIRST BREAK IN THE MOUNTAIN WALL, DRIVER! WE CAN'T CHANCE OUR LUCK ON THE OPEN ROAD!



THEY PUSHED THE TRUCK OVER THE PRECIPITOUS SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN TRILK. IT BOUNCED THREE TIMES BEFORE DISAPPEARING WITH A ROAR INTO THE DARK DEPTHS OF THE GORGE.

DOUBT IF ANYONE'LL EVER SPOT IT DOWN THERE, SIR.

RIGHT, GET MOVING! ONE HOUR'S SOLID SLOG OVER THE TOP BEFORE THE REAL WORK BEGINS!



STRETCHED FLAT ON THE DUSTY ROCK, MORRELL EXAMINED THE GUNSITE BELOW HIM.



THEY'VE GOT EVERYTHING LAID OUT TO FIGHT OFF AN ATTACK FROM THE SEA. THE LAST THING THEY'LL EXPECT IS A DEMOLITION PARTY IN NAZI UNIFORMS MARCHING IN FROM THE REAR!

YOU MAKE IT SOUND EASY, SIR!

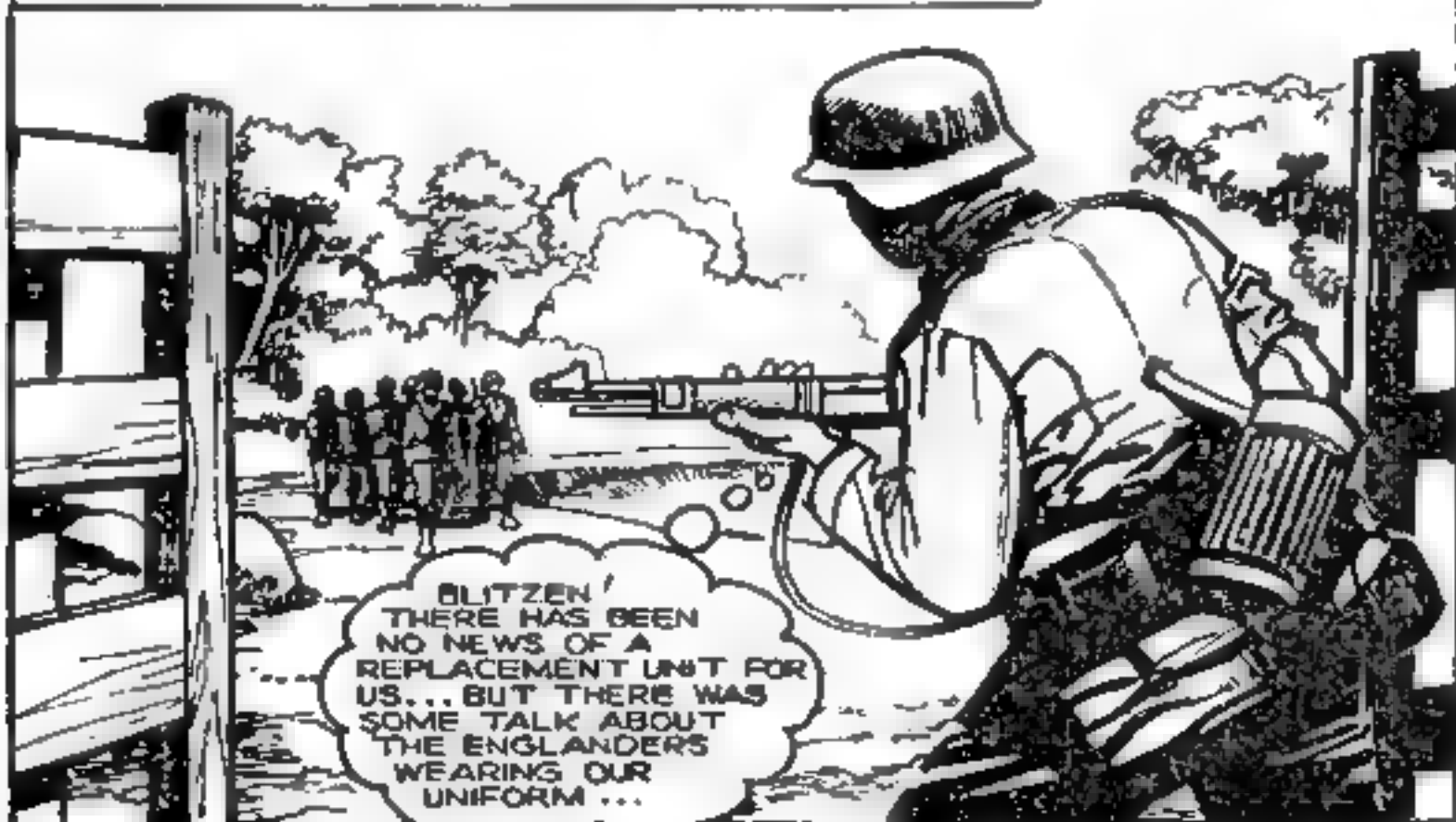
UNFRIENDLY EYES WATCHED THEM AS THEY MARCHED ALONG THE PEBBLED ROAD THAT WOUND TO THE FIRST DEFENCE POST.



THE SENTRY WAS PUZZLED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE UNIT. HE HAD NO ORDERS TO ADMIT SUCH A GROUP, BUT HE RAISED THE BARRIER TO LET THEM IN. THE COLUMN MARCHED ON INTO THE CAMP AND THE SENTRY RECEIVED AN UNPLEASANT SHOCK ...



THE UNCONSCIOUS SENTRY WAS PUSHED INTO THE SCRUB AS THE COLUMN MARCHED ON UNFALTERINGLY TOWARDS THE FINAL GUARD POST.



THE SENTRY'S REACTIONS WERE FAST — BUT NOT AS FAST AS MORRELL'S! AS THE SENTRY SIGHTED HIS RIFLE, MORRELL FIRED ...



BUT THE BURST OF FIRE HAD RAISED THE ALARM. THE DUTY OFFICER HURRIEDLY ORDERED HIS MEN TO ATTACK.

ACHTUNG!
ENEMY ACTION!
GUARD ALL EXITS!
THEY MUST BE
KILLED!



THE SPYHEAD RAIDERS SOON OVERCAME THE BEWILDERED OPPOSITION IN THE GUN PITS. AND TURNED TO BEAT BACK THE ADVANCING NAZIS


ALL THE EXPLOSIVE
CHARGES AREN'T READY,
JOCK! YOU'LL HAVE TO
HOLD THE JERRIES OFF
FOR TEN MINUTES!



Storm Troop

WORKING FAST, MORRELL HAD THE EXPLOSIVES PREPARED IN HALF THE TIME. BUT BY THEN THE NAZIS, WHO HAD SURROUNDED THEM, WERE CLOSING IN TIGHTLY...

TAKE PROOGER AND FIRE THE CHARGES, JOCK. THEY'RE ON TEN SECOND FUSES. WE'LL GIVE YOU COVERING FIRE UNTIL YOU JOIN US!



THE SPEARHEAD MEN WERE WELL ON THEIR WAY WHEN A SHOUT FROM SERGEANT MACDONALD BROUGHT MORRELL TO A HALT...

HOLD IT, SR! I THINK PROOGER'S BEEN HIT!



WATCH YOURSELF, JOCK!

SERGEANT MACDONALD SENT A BURST OF HOT LEAD WHIZZING AT THE NAZIS, WHILE MORRELL LIFTED PRODGER TO A SITTING POSITION.

PRODGER'S NOT BEEN HIT, JOCK-- HE'S JUST SCARED STIFF WE SHOULDN'T HAVE RISKED OUR NECKS!



QUIVERING WITH FEAR, THE CLUMSY PRIVATE WAS DRIVEN FIERCELY TOWARDS THE CLIFF FACE BY SERGEANT MACDONALD.

GET GOING, YOU GREAT LUMP OF JELLY!

STEP UP YOUR COVER FIRE, LADS, OR THEY'LL NEVER MAKE IT!



TWO SECONDS LATER, THE CLATTER OF THE AUTOMATICS WAS LOST IN THE ROAR OF THE EXPLOSION AS THE GUNS BLEW SKY-HIGH.

THE JERRIES MUST HAVE TAKEN THE FULL BLAST OF THAT! WE SHOULD GET CLEAR BEFORE THEY GET OVER IT



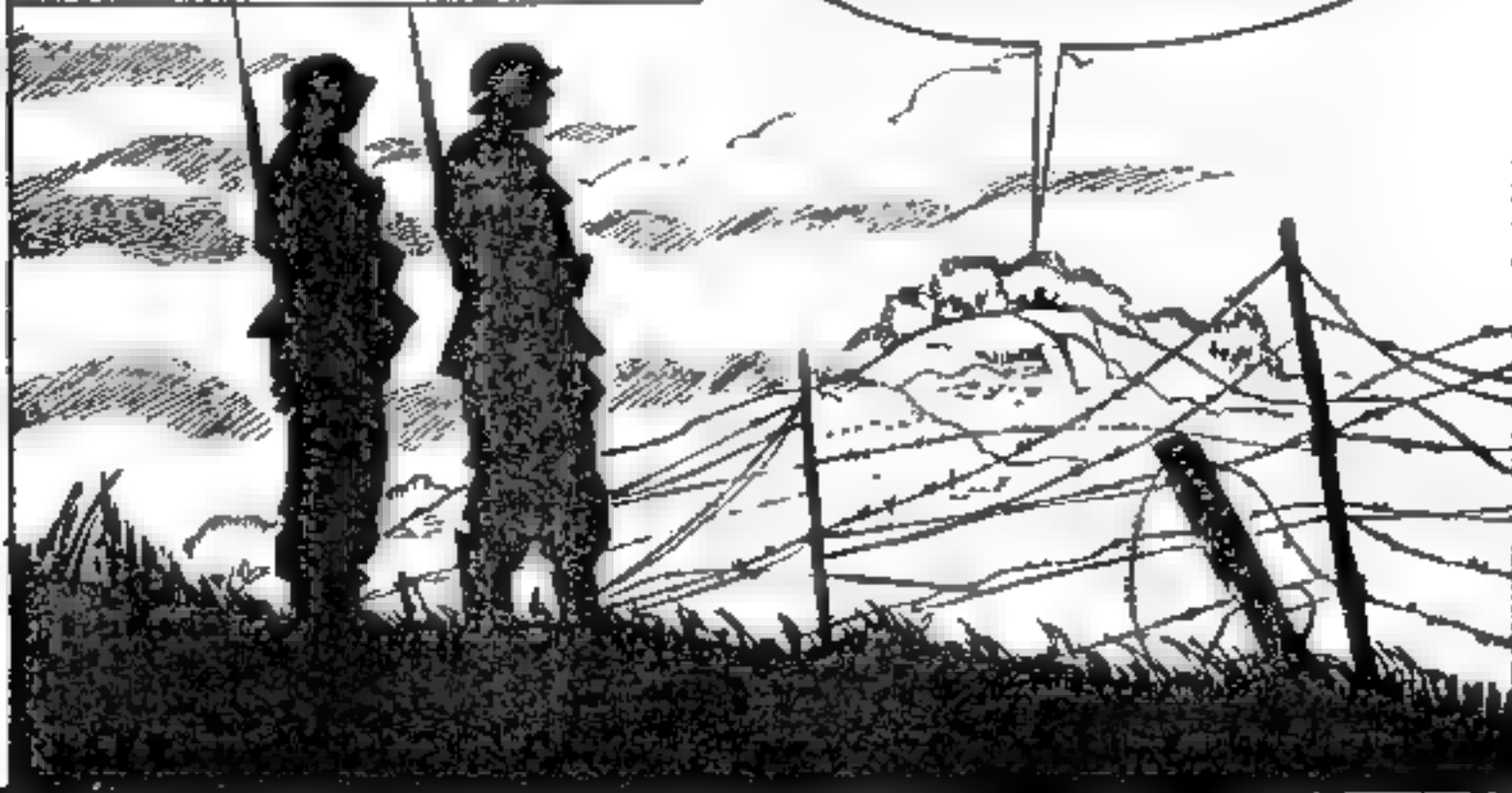
IN THE STUNNED CHAOS THAT FOLLOWED THE EXPLOSION, THE SPEARHEAD UNIT MADE AN UNFLURRIED RETREAT DOWN THE CLIFF FACE.

GET MOVING, PRODDER! WE WON'T WAIT FOR YOU A SECOND TIME!

TWO DOWN, ONE TO GO... BUT THE THIRD IS GOING TO BE TRICKY...

AFTER A BRIEF REST FOR FOOD, MORRELL LED THEM THROUGH THE SCRUBLAND. THAT EVENING, THEY LOOKED DOWN AT THEIR FINAL OBJECTIVE.

THERE IT IS...THE BATTERY GUARDING SUPRINA BAY! THOSE GUNS MUST BE SILENCED BEFORE THE LANDING CRAFT ARRIVE IN SIX HOURS' TIME!



Chapter 5. *Overture to Invasion*

MORRELL SENT OUT PATROLS. THEIR INFORMATION WAS DISTURBING...



THE COMMANDER OF "SPEARHEAD" WAS NOT ALONE WITH HIS PROBLEMS. NOT A MILE AWAY, HIS NAZI COUNTERPART HAD MORRELL IN MIND.



AN EXCITED LEUTENANT BURST THROUGH THE DOORWAY.



IT WAS ALL TOO EASY, ALL TOO QUIET. MORRELL BEGAN TO FEEL UNEASY.

HALF AN HOUR AGO THE PLACE
SWARMED WITH GERMS. NOW
THERE ISN'T A MAN TO BE
SEEN! IS IT A TRAP?



AS THE LAST GERMAN-UNIFORMED COMMANDO PASSED BENEATH HIM,
A NAZI SIGNALLER WAS QUIETLY MURMURING INTO HIS TRANSMITTER.



ENEMY STORM
TROOP HAS JUST
PASSED...
HEADING SOUTH
WEST!

THE INFORMATION HE RECEIVED SEEMED TO SURPRISE THE COLONEL...

SO FEW OF THEM! AND THEY HAVE DONE SO MUCH DAMAGE!

WE HAVE THEM WELL PENNED IN NOW, HERR OFFICER! WE COULD ANNIHILATE THEM IN TEN MINUTES!



X MARKS THE SPOT FOR THE AMBUSH, LEUTENANT! THEY CANNOT HOPE TO FIGHT THEIR WAY OUT. WE WILL ASK THEM TO SURRENDER...



MORRELL'S TAUT NERVES JUMPED WHEN A GUTTURAL VOICE SHOUTED FROM THE BLACKNESS OF THE NIGHT.

HALT, ENGLANDER! STORM TROOP! YOU ARE SURROUNDED. THERE IS NO ESCAPE, SO DROP YOUR WEAPONS AND COME QUIETLY!



TWO D.M.-MACHINE GUNS OF THE SPANHEAD GROUP BLAZED INTO THE DAWNING, BUT THE WELL DISCIPLINED NAZI RANKS LET THE BUST GO OVER THEIR HEADS.

THAT WAS A FOOLISH MOVE, WE DO NOT WANT TO KILL YOU, BUT IT WOULD BE EASY TO DO SO.

THEY WANT US FOR ONE THING, JACK, BEFORE THEY HAND US OVER TO THE GESTAPO!

TO EMPHASISE THEIR WARNING, THE NAZIS FIRED A BUST FROM EACH LINE IN THEIR CIRCULAR FORMS.

WHY DON'T WE DO WHAT THEY SAY... WE HAVEN'T A CHANCE!

TURN IT UP, PROCKER! IT'S BAD ENOUGH WITHOUT YOUR GRIN! MORRIE! L'S THE GEEZER TO GET US OUT OF THIS!

FOR A LONG HOUR, THE GRIM BATTLE OF WITS CONTINUED. MORRELL PROBED AT EVERY CORNER, BUT ALWAYS WITHDREW AFTER FINDING THE STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY. THE GERMAN COLONEL STILL BELIEVED IN CAUTION...

BUT THEY SHOW NO SIGNS OF SURRENDER. HERR OBERST! SHALL WE TURN THE MORTARS ON THEM?

NO! PERHAPS THEY ARE THE BAIT FOR US! WHO KNOWS WHAT WE WOULD BRING DOWN ON OUR HEADS! WE SHALL AWAIT THE DAWN



MORRELL HAD ALREADY SEEN THROUGH THE NAZI COMMANDER'S REASONING



THEY'RE WORRIED ABOUT OUR TRUE STRENGTH, JOCK. WHEN THE DAWN COMES, AND THE BARGES START ARRIVING, THEY'LL MOP US UP QUICKLY. WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME TO GET OUT OF THIS!

MORRELL TOLD HIS MEN THE POSITION, AND SERGEANT MACDONALD OFFERED HIS SOLUTION

THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER... TO FIGHT! A SMALL PARTY TRYING A BREAK OUT MIGHT LEAVE A LOOPHOLE FOR THE MAIN GROUP! CAN WE HAVE A TRY, SIR?

THAT'S THE SPIRIT, SERGEANT! YOU'VE ALL HEARD WHAT THE JERRY CALLED US 'STORM TROOP'! LET'S LIVE UP TO THAT NAME!



THE DESPERATE COURAGE OF THE FEW MEN WAS FORCE ENOUGH TO COMPEL THE NAZIS TO HIT BACK IN SHEER DEFENCE.

GET EVERY ONE OF THEM!

HIMMEL! THEY WILL NOT GIVE IN, THESE ENGLISH!



BUT THE OTHER NAZI CREWS DID NOT GIVE THEM TIME TO EXPLOIT THEIR BRIEF VICTORY. TWO MORE SPEARHEAD MEN DIED UNDER THE WITHERING CROSSFIRE...



WITH A SCARED LOOK AT THE FALLEN SERGEANT, PROOGER AND WATERS STUMBLED BACK TOWARDS THE MAIN GROUP

IN THE NOISE AND CONFUSION, MORRELL HAD TO SHAKE THE TRUTH OUT OF WATERS...



WHAT'S HAPPENED OUT THERE?

THE SERGEANT AND THE OTHERS GOT HIT..

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS WHERE SERGEANT MACDONALD IS, WATERS. TAKE ME TO HIM!



THE ANGER IN MORRELL'S EYES STILLED WATER'S PAIN. HE LED MORRELL TO WHERE THE SERGEANT WAS LYING.

WE'RE TOO LATE HE'S DEAD, BUT HE WAS A BRAVE MAN--THE BRAVEST I'VE EVER KNOWN!



MORRELL TURNED FROM THE BODY OF THE SERGEANT, TO FREE HIMSELF STAMPPED INTO THE FACE OF PRICE.

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, MAN! MACDONALD'S DEAD.. AND HE LED THE WAY IF WE HADN'T TRIED TO HELP HIM, COMRADES OUT OF DANGER!



BUT PRODGER HAD REACHED THE END OF HIS ENDURANCE. HE COULD NO LONGER CONTROL HIS FEAR...



CRAZED WITH FEAR, HE RUSHED ON. GERMAN BULLETS SMASHED HOME, BUT NOTHING SEEMED TO STOP HIS FRENZIED RUSH.



A FINAL BURST FROM A SCHEISSER JERKEID PRODDI R FORWARD HIS HEAVY FRAML THUDDED DOWN ON THE FIRST OF A HUNDRED MINES.

ACHTUNG!
TAKE COVER!
THE MINEFIELD!

SOME MILES AWAY ACROSS THE SEA, THOSE ON THE LANDING SHIP OF THE INVASION FLEET WATCHED THE CHAIN OF EXPLOSIVES LIGHTEN THE HOSTILE COAST . . .

LOOKS LIKE
SOMEBODY
FORESTALLED
US, SIR!

COULD BE
JERRY PULLING
OUT HOPE SO FOR
THE SAKE OF THOSE
POOR INFANTRY
BLOKES!

MORRILL STARED TRANSFIXED AT THE RESULT OF THE MINEFIELD EXPLOSIONS. THE NAZIS HAD MINED THE APPROACHES ONLY TOO WELL. THE GUNS HAD BEEN BLOWN TO TWISTED SCRAP-METAL ...



SOON THE SEA WAS CHURNED BY BARGES AND LANDING CRAFT. BEHIND THEM, A DEMORALISED, SHAKEN ENEMY RETREATED TO THEIR INLAND DEFENCES ...



THE BRIGADIER MET THEM AS THEY CLIMBED ABOARD THE DESTROYER.

YOU'VE DONE A FINE JOB, LIEUTENANT. YOUR SPEARHEAD UNIT WAS A BRILLIANT SUCCESS! YOU WON'T MEET ANY OPPOSITION IN THE FUTURE TO YOUR IDEA!

THANK YOU, SIR! WE LEARNED A LOT IN THOSE FEW HOURS...



THAT NIGHT, AS THE TUMULT OF THE BATTLE CONTINUED, PRIVATE WATERS APPROACHED MORRELL.

ABOUT SERGEANT MACDONALD, SIR... I'M SORRY ABOUT HIM! HE WAS A GOOD BLOKE!

THANK YOU, WATERS. I'M SORRY ABOUT THEM ALL... EVEN PROODGER!





FUNNY THING
IT HAPPENED TO BE
OLD PRODGER...SAVED
OUR BACON, DIDN'T HE?
IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND,
SIR, I'D LIKE TO STICK
AROUND WITH THE UNIT.
I MIGHT COME IN HANDY..
IF IT'S ONLY FOR
CARTING THE AMMO
ABOUT!

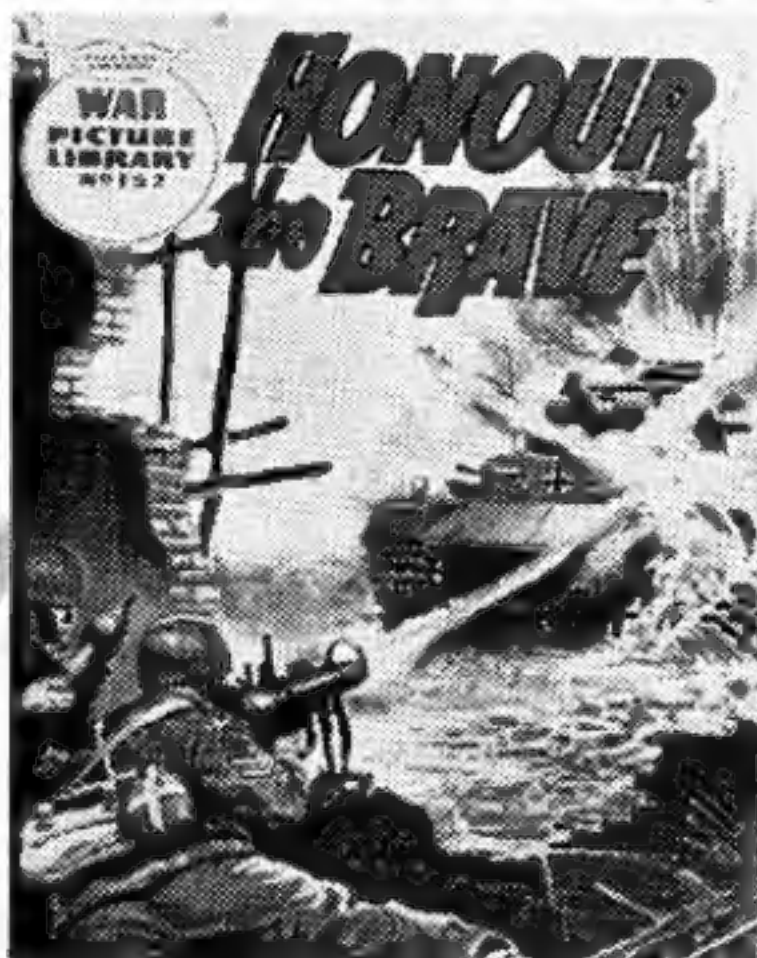
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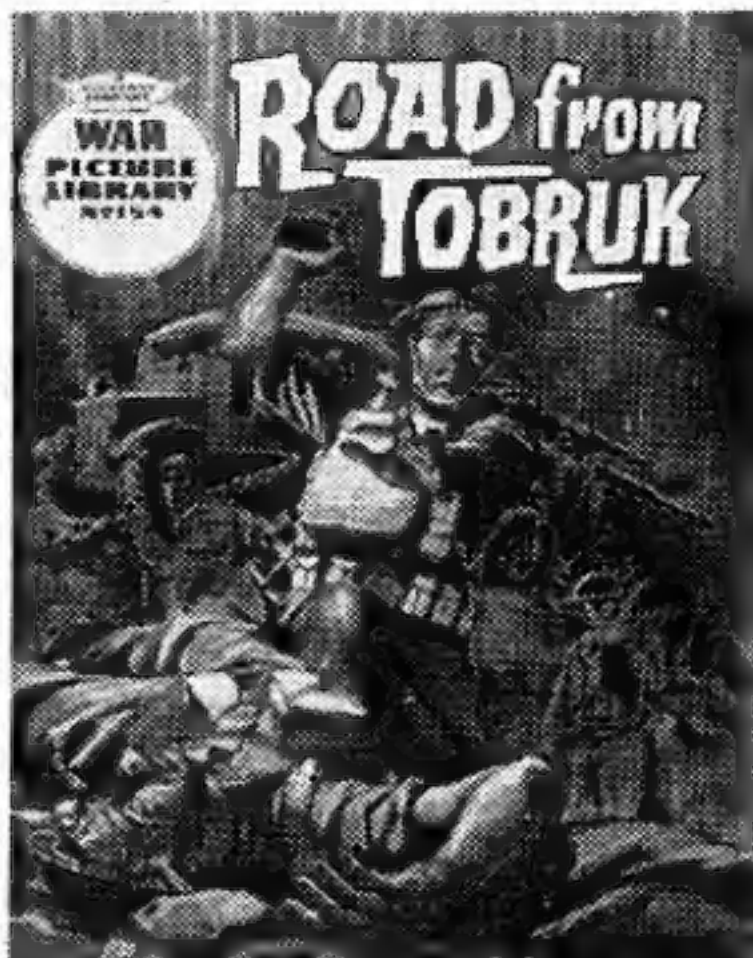
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